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The Environmental Protection Agency said Wednesday it will fine...

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Article Text:

The Environmental Protection Agency said Wednesday it will fine a New York City company \$500,000 for importing and exporting **oil-filled radiator** heaters that were contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls, or **PCBs**.

Under a consent agreement with the EPA, DeLonghi America Inc. also is required to notify some 70,000 buyers that they may face health risks from leaks of PCB-contaminated oil from some of the heaters.

'Although there have been reports of a limited number of leaks from DeLonghi heaters, their use does not present an unreasonable risk of PCB exposure to the consumer,' the EPA said.

The agency said **PCBs** can cause tumors, skin lesions and stomach and reproductive disorders, however, it added that most of the DeLonghi heaters have low PCB concentrations.

In the event of a leak, the EPA said skin contact with the oil should be avoided during cleanup.

DeLonghi imported for sale in the United States about 485,000 **oil-filled radiator** heaters, some of which contain recycled oil that may be contaminated with **PCBs**. The company then exported for sale abroad approximately 37,500 of the heaters.

Federal law prohibits any commercial activity involving **PCBs** without an exemption from the EPA.

The consent agreement requires DeLonghi to notify holders of warranty cards for heaters manufactured before June 1986 that are model numbers 5108, 5108-T or 5307. The notices will say that DeLonghi heaters with the serial number 86-20 or lower contain recycled oil and may be contaminated with **PCBs**.

In addition, DeLonghi is required to set up a toll-free hotline to answer customer questions and to advise major heater retailers and service centers about how to handle consumer inquiries.

The EPA said it discovered the presence of PCB-contaminated oil in DeLonghi radiator heaters in April 1986 and immediately stopped their importation.

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